

# 10 THINGS:

## The Military Should Know About the CIA

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN D. JOHNSON

Since President Harry S. Truman created the CIA with the signing of the National Security Act in 1947, the CIA and the Department of Defense have worked together toward a common goal of protecting U.S. national security.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, the results of CIA-DoD cooperation have been mixed. At times dealings between CIA officers and their military counterparts have been positive, while at other times the two organization's cultures have clashed and officers on both sides have sought to keep the other at arm's length.<sup>2</sup> However, after the end of the Gulf War (1991) and especially since 9/11, CIA-DoD cooperation and understanding have increased across much of the spectrum of conflict ranging from conventional combat and insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan to unconventional warfare against transnational terrorism.<sup>3</sup> This is particularly true of the relationship between the CIA and the military's special operations forces.<sup>4</sup> The successful raid against Osama Bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in May 2011, is probably the best contemporary illustration of CIA-DoD cooperation and highlights the complementary nature of each organization's unique capabilities.<sup>5</sup>

Going forward, the CIA and the military will need to continue to work together in Afghanistan, even after the drawdown of U.S. military forces and the 2014 transition to Afghan-led military operations is complete, and in the fight against unconventional threats in places like South Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. Therefore, it is important that the military understands the CIA's missions, organization, authorities and capabilities, as well as how the CIA is different from the military. To that end, what follows is a list of 10 things the military should know about the CIA.<sup>6</sup>

**1. CIA Mission.** The CIA is an independent U.S. government agency responsible for providing national security intelligence to senior U.S. policymakers.<sup>7</sup> The National Security Act of 1947 established the authority for the agency to carry out three principal activities: collect foreign intelligence; analyze intelligence; and perform other functions and duties as the President may direct, "where it is intended that the role of the U.S. Government will not be apparent

or acknowledged publicly." In other words, covert action.<sup>8</sup> And, while one could argue that the CIA's foreign-intelligence collection mission lies at the heart of what the CIA does, there are also essential and unique facets of the CIA's intelligence analysis and covert-action missions, which are addressed below.

**2. Organization.** To accomplish its mission, the CIA is separated into four basic components or directorates: the National Clandestine Service, which was previously called the Directorate of Operations until 2005; the Directorate of Intelligence; the Directorate of Science and Technology; and the Directorate of Support.<sup>9</sup> Each directorate also contains a myriad of sub-elements both at CIA headquarters and in the field.<sup>10</sup> There is also a director's staff, which consists of multiple specialized offices such as the Office of Public Affairs, General Council, Congressional Affairs and the Associate Director for Military Affairs.<sup>11</sup>

The mission of the NCS is to strengthen national security and foreign policy objectives through the clandestine collection of human intelligence and covert action.<sup>12</sup> The NCS consists mainly of operations officers whose job it is to collect foreign intelligence information often by recruiting individuals, or assets, with access to sought after intelligence information. NCS officers are probably the type of person that many people think of when they think about the CIA — a James Bond type character.

The DI consists of officers who analyze intelligence from multiple sources such as NCS-generated HUMINT reporting, signals intelligence, imagery intelligence, military intelligence reporting, and open source intelligence, among countless other sources. The result of this collection and analysis is the production of all-source or finished intelligence for the President, cabinet members and senior national security decision makers.<sup>13</sup>

If an NCS officer is our James Bond type, then the DS&T includes our "Q" department. The DS&T consists of officers who create, adapt, develop and operate the technical collection systems and apply enabling technologies to the collection, analysis and processing of information.<sup>14</sup> They develop the tools and technol-



ogy needed to both collect foreign intelligence and support CIA activities in the field. As a classic example, think of a tie clip that is also a miniaturized camera.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, DS officers provide everything the CIA needs to accomplish its mission. DS officers are often the first CIA officers sent into difficult operational areas and are responsible for establishing key support functions such as communications, supply chains, facilities, financial, and medical services.<sup>16</sup>

**3. Directorates & Centers.** In addition to its four directorates, the CIA manages several functionally oriented centers with which the military routinely interacts. These centers include the Counterterrorism Center, Information Operations Center, Counterproliferation Center, Crime and Narcotics Center, Open Source Center, Special Activities Center and Counterintelligence Center.<sup>17</sup> The major difference between the CIA's directorates and centers is that the centers bring together individuals from all four CIA Directorates and include officers from across the intelligence community such as the National Security Agency, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.<sup>18</sup>

**4. CIA Customers & Products.** Whereas the military might seek out HUMINT sources at the tactical or operational levels in order to answer the commander's priority intelligence requirements, the CIA for the most part, focuses on strategic-level HUMINT sources, or assets, who have the placement and access to the types of information that is of value to senior U.S. policy makers.<sup>19</sup> Of note, the NCS's HUMINT reporting is available to the military in the form of classified Telegraphic Disseminations.

In a similar vein, the DI focuses its all-source intelligence analysis on topics of interest to the president and senior U.S. officials. The DI is a significant contributor to the intelligence community's premiere intelligence product, the Presidential Daily Brief and many of the DI's products are also available to the military via the CIA's classified web site, the Worldwide Intelligence Review.<sup>20</sup>

Other unclassified CIA products the military should be mindful of are: the annual World Fact Book; the CIA's regularly published online directory of chiefs of state and cabinet members of foreign governments; and unclassified extracts from the CIA's professional journal, *Studies in Intelligence*.<sup>21</sup>

**5. What is Covert Action?** The National Security Act of 1947 gives the CIA the mission to conduct other functions and duties when directed to do so by the President (i.e., covert action).<sup>22</sup> This is codified in law in Title 50 U.S. Code, which is why some refer to the CIA's covert action authorities as Title 50 Authorities.<sup>23</sup> The President directs the CIA, or other government agencies, to conduct covert actions via a mechanism called a Presidential Finding.<sup>24</sup> What sets covert action apart from other CIA and DoD activities is that for covert action, the involvement of the U.S. government is not publicly acknowledged during the operation, after the fact, or if the operation is discovered by a foreign government or the U.S. media.<sup>25</sup>

**6. Protection of Sources & Methods.** The CIA, like DoD and other intelligence agencies, places a great deal of importance on the protection of sources of intelligence and methods of collection.<sup>26</sup> As a result, much of the CIA's sensitive intelligence is highly compartmented such that only those individuals who have a "need to know" and are "read into" a program have access to the information. The military is read into CIA programs when appropriate, but often times

CIA officers may not be able to share information about a CIA program with the military because the program is compartmented.

**7. Chief of Station.** In the field, the CIA manages its activities through a network of overseas stations.<sup>27</sup> The senior CIA officer at each station is the Chief of Station.<sup>28</sup> The COS serves in much the same capacity as a military commander would.<sup>29</sup> Among other things, the COS supervises the station's foreign intelligence collection efforts, liaises with foreign intelligence service partners, and manages the deconfliction of HUMINT and other operations with U.S. government entities such as DoD.<sup>30</sup>

**8. Rank & Relationships.** While most CIA officers are certainly aware of military rank, the CIA is a less rank-conscious organization than the military. Practically speaking, a military officer or senior non-commissioned officer might walk into a meeting or send an e-mail to someone in the military and they would in all likelihood receive an immediate response due, in part, to their rank or position. The military's hierarchical structure works well for the military but does not always translate well to civilians who often work more informally. When dealing with the CIA, you would probably get a better result by meeting with your CIA counterpart in person, using your first name rather than your rank and last name and by developing a relationship with that person. In the CIA, it seems, relationships go a long way toward getting things done. That is not to say CIA officers do not appreciate the importance of rank or that relationships are not important in the military. Rather, it is simply a matter of differences in culture. Rank is but one example of the differences between the CIA and the military. Other differences include uniforms, acronyms, jargon, grooming standards, age, education, gender ratios, pay, budgets, and the number of personnel.<sup>31</sup>

**9. Leaders and Managers.** Another cultural difference between the CIA and the military is the idea of leadership versus management. The military is a leadership-oriented organization and this is apparent in the DoD's Professional Military Education curriculum. From the start of their careers, the military develops its officers to be leaders and leadership training continues over the course of an officer's career as they are promoted through the ranks. By contrast, the CIA has layers of management from the team, branch, group and division level all the way up to the directorate and agency-level senior management. Further, the CIA develops officers to be case officers, technical intelligence officers and analysts first, and only later in their careers do officers get the opportunity to become managers, typically at the GS13 through GS15 level. It is not to say that CIA managers are not also leaders, or that military leaders are not also managers. However, the two organizations do have different labels, training and timelines when it comes to who is in charge and what their role is. Related to this is the notion of experts and generalists. Because the CIA develops its officers to be case officers, technical intelligence officers and analysts first, the result is an organization of substantive experts. Military officers, on the other hand, tend to be generalists who move back and forth between command and staff positions and from one geographic region to another.

**10. CIA-Military Nexus.** To address the need for greater CIA-DoD cooperation and understanding, there are multiple connections the military can use to interface with the CIA and vice versa. At CIA headquarters, the Office of the Associate Director for Military Affairs has the mission to coordinate, plan, execute and sustain worldwide

activities that support CIA and DoD interaction based on priorities established by the Director of the CIA to achieve national security objectives.<sup>32</sup> In the field, in addition to the previously mentioned Stations, the CIA has representatives located at DoD's Combatant Commands and Senior Service Colleges.<sup>33</sup> Finally, the CIA will at times embed liaison teams with deploying military commands to facilitate on-the-spot operational coordination and deconfliction.<sup>34</sup>

The successful Bin Laden raid in 2011 represents a high point in the CIA-DoD relationship.<sup>35</sup> What is more, it appears the U.S. will continue to face threats in Afghanistan and elsewhere for years to come. Therefore, it is critically important that the CIA and the military understand each other, work well together, respect organizational and cultural differences and continue to leverage each other's complimentary capabilities against common enemies in order to better protect and defend the U.S. **SW**

*Lieutenant Colonel John D. Johnson, a U.S. Army officer, is a 1992 graduate of Texas Christian University. He has served overseas in Afghanistan, Iraq, Korea and Germany in addition to multiple assignments in the U.S. He is currently assigned to the CIA's Office of the Associate Director for Military Affairs. This article has been reviewed by the CIA to prevent the disclosure of classified information. That review neither constitutes CIA authentication of information nor implies CIA endorsement of the author's views.*

## Notes:

1. About CIA, at <https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/index.html> (accessed September 21, 2012). See also CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, at <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/our-first-line-of-defense-presidential-reflections-on-us-intelligence/truman.html> (accessed September 20, 2012).
2. CIA Featured Story Archive, *A Look Back: First CIA-Military Command Relationship Agreement*, at <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2011-featured-story-archive/cia-military-command-relationship-agreement.html> (accessed September 18, 2012).
3. *CIA Military Affairs, History*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/military-affairs/history.html> (accessed September 25, 2012). See also Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 11, 2001*, (Penguin: New York (2004). For discussion on Spectrum of Conflict, see Chapter 2, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations, Headquarters, Department of the Army, February 2008.
4. Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York, Penguin Press: 2012), pp. 188-189, 203-241, 262-265. See also Julian E. Barnes and Siobhan Gorman, "The Long, Winding Path to Closer CIA and Military Cooperation," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2011, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304520804576340023120275758.html> (accessed September 22, 2012).
5. Transcript of President Obama's Remarks to the Intelligence Community at CIA Headquarters, May 20, 2011, at [www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony](http://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony) (accessed April 29, 2012).
6. See John D. Johnson, "Working with the CIA," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, Apr-Jun 2012, pp. 50-52.
7. CIA Homepage, About CIA, at <https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/index.html> (accessed September 20, 2012).
8. Remarks of CIA General Counsel Stephan W. Preston at Harvard Law School, April 10, 2012, at [www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2012-speeches-testimony](http://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2012-speeches-testimony), (accessed April 29, 2012).

9. CIA Press Release, *Establishment of the National Clandestine Service*, October 13, 2005, at <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/press-releases-statements/press-release-archive-2005/pr10132005.html> (accessed September 20, 2012).
10. *CIA Publications*, CIA Organizational Chart, at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/additional-publications/the-work-of-a-nation/cia-director-and-principles/cia-organization-chart.html> (accessed September 18, 2012).
11. Offices of CIA, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/index.html> (accessed September 24, 2012).
12. *CIA Clandestine Service, Our Mission*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/ clandestine-service/our-mission.html> (accessed September 24, 2012).
13. *CIA Intelligence & Analysis*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/intelligence-analysis/index.html> (accessed September 24, 2012).
14. *CIA Science & Technology*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/science-technology/index.html> (accessed September 24, 2012).
15. The CIA museum offers tours to select military groups and houses and impressive display of DS&T's past creations and innovations.
16. *CIA Support to Mission*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/mission-support/index.html> (accessed September 24, 2012).
17. *CIA Information Operations Center*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/intelligence-analysis/organization-1/ioc-ag.html> (accessed September 20, 2012).
18. *CIA Publications, Centers in the CIA*, at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/additional-publications/the-work-of-a-nation/cia-director-and-principles/centers-in-the-cia.html> (accessed September 20, 2012).
19. *CIA Intelligence & Analysis*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/intelligence-analysis/index.html> (accessed September 17, 2012).
20. *CIA Intelligence & Analysis*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/intelligence-analysis/what-we-do.html> (accessed May 10, 2012).
21. At <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/intelligence-analysis/products.html> (accessed September 24, 2012).
22. Remarks of CIA General Counsel Stephan W. Preston at Harvard Law School, April 10, 2012.
23. At <http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/uscode/50/15/III/413b> (accessed September 22, 2012).
24. *Ibid.* See also George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: The CIA During America's Time of Crisis* (New York: Harper, 2007), pg. 521.
25. Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 520.
26. James B. Bruce, "The Consequences of Permissive Neglect: Laws and Leaks of Classified Information," CIA Center for the Studies of Intelligence, at <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol47no1/article04.html> (accessed September 15, 2012).
27. See Joby Warrick, *The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA*, (New York: Vintage, 2011).
28. Garrett Jones, "Working with the CIA," *Parameters*, Winter 2001-02, pp. 28-39.
29. *Ibid.*
30. See Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York, Penguin Press: 2012).
31. DoD personnel and budget numbers are significantly larger than the CIA.
32. *CIA Military Affairs*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/military-affairs/index.html> (accessed September 15, 2012).
33. *CIA Military Affairs, What We Do*, at <https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/military-affairs/what-we-do.html> (accessed September 15, 2012).
34. *Ibid.*
35. President Obama's Remarks to the Intelligence Community at CIA Headquarters, May 20, 2011. See also Julian E. Barnes and Siobhan Gorman, "The Long, Winding Path to Closer CIA and Military Cooperation," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2011.